

perhaps the control of the finance, together with a power of visitation besides or in conjunction with other inspectors, and a limited authority to hear complaints brought against the medical chief, and to report their conclusions to the inspector or the Governor. The first of these functions is one which requires only honesty, and could hardly be transferred with equal convenience to any other person or body; and for the second, the boards are not necessarily unfit, though the work might be more efficiently performed by the auditor-general of the colony in cases where there is no property to be administered. If they should retain this duty, it would perhaps be advisable that, in connection with it, they should have the appointment of the clerk or bursar, and that they should be incorporated and granted all necessary powers for holding and dealing with interests in realty. In case it should at any time appear necessary to remove a medical superintendent, the power of removal, subject to the sanction of the Governor, ought to follow that of appointment.

As for their legislative functions, these ought to cease to be necessary. If a proper code of regulations were drawn up once for all by competent professional authorities, nothing more would remain to be done except to give the medical chief the power to make alterations in the executive arrangements subject to the approval of the inspectors, and, as at present, of the Governor, or to give a similar power to the inspectors themselves.

The patronage of all inferior offices, such as those of head-nurses, nurses, or keepers, ought undoubtedly to go to the medical chief. He ought to have the power both of appointment and of summary removal, since no one else can judge of the actual efficiency of the attendants, and great harm might be done to the patients by delay. Should the removal be unjust, a complaint would lie against the chief to the board, as suggested above.

A difficult question arises with reference to the appointment of chaplains in asylums. However great the spiritual or the disciplinary value of religious services may be to the insane, want of judgment in their use may sometimes give occasion to more than countervailing evils. Considering the delicacy of the question in each case, it would seem to be desirable that the appointment should be made by the governor of the colony.

There remains the power of visitation and inspection, which must form the subject of a separate section. As suggested above, it would be well that the boards should visit and report at certain and uncertain times, in conjunction with other visitors, but they are very unfit to be the sole depositaries of such a power.

With reference to the measures suggested in this section, it is to be observed that they do not necessarily involve any increase of expense. It may not always be easy to find a medical officer who will reside and relinquish private practice without a larger salary than in some cases is at present provided; but on other grounds it is absolutely necessary to find one on some terms, and under the proposed system he may not be less willing to come, inasmuch as he will have larger powers and freer scope for action.

A note of the institutions to which it is suggested that these provisions should be extended more or less completely as may be practicable in each case is appended.*

The four hospitals of Victoria are managed by committees of the subscribers. The nature of their government has been described in section 36. The evils which exist in them are of a kind which would disappear under the influence of a sanitary act, and of more effective inspection.

But in those institutions where the provisions above described might be adopted, they would at once cut off the source of those two great classes of defects which flow from divided opinions and want of specific knowledge in the governing body; they would make abuses of omission more rare in proportion, as what is one man's business is more likely to be done than what may be the business of either of several men: and though it may be true, on the other hand, that the plan of government by a single chief is compatible with the existence of greater positive wrongs than any which the mere inefficiency of boards places it in the power of subordinates to practise, yet such a plan, whilst giving greater power to commit them, would admit also of more complete and more manageable securities against their commission. Such securities are to be found in inspections and reports.

* See Appendix, Note II.